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4 May 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer
for USSR and Eastern Europe
Legislative Counsel

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Congressional Report on Trip to USSR

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1. On the 3rd of May I attended a meeting in the White House with Dr. Brzezinski and nine members of Congress who had recently gone to the Soviet Union. The Congressmen were:

Lucien Nedzi
Willis Gradison
Ronald Dellums
Charles Vanik
John Brademas
Richardson Preyer
Timothy Wirth
Matthew McHugh
Richard Gephardt

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2. The tenor of the comments of this group were:

a. The Soviets received them with very warm hospitality and great candor.

b. The Soviets were very anxious to conclude SALT.

c. The Soviets clearly want SALT because they need the money to improve their economy. It is obvious just looking around the Soviet Union that they have real economic problems with roads, etc. Several stated emphatically that the Soviets they talked to recognized that their economy was a problem. They weren't, on interrogation, fully persuasive in this respect. They complained repeatedly that the U.S. kept changing its position on SALT and it was difficult to conclude the agreement. They were worried that if it took us this long with SALT II, we would go on forever with SALT III while new and threatening developments were proceeding in strategic weaponry technology. They said national technical means

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were adequate on both sides but that it was the United States who had closed off discussion of any on-site inspection.

d. The Soviets were obsessed with the threat from China. They feel the Chinese are barbarians and their leaders immoral, and that there is no reprieve. They really threatened that our playing the China card would be dangerous.


e. 98.4% of all applications for emigration are approved initially and some of the remaining 1.6% eventually.

f. They pooh-poohed civil defense--said there were no drills, it was nothing of significance.

g. The Congressmen felt the Soviets very clearly want to increase trade with us. The Soviets would interpret most favored MFN for China only as a very significant sign of US/Chinese collusion.

h. Sakharov and a number of others were strongly against repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. It wasn't clear whether they were against a waiver with respect to it.

i. It was clear that few people understood the decisionmaking process in the United States and especially the Congress.

j. When asked by one of the Congressmen as to the consequence of Brezhnev's poor health, the Soviets indicated that the policy of detente was irreversible. 

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STANSFIELD TURNER 

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RANDOM THOUGHTS ON SALT VERIFICATION

The purpose of verification is not to win legal points. It is to protect our national interests. This does not require that we detect every single action by the Soviets which might constitute less than the most precise compliance with the terms of the agreement. It does involve:

- The prospect of the Soviets being able to unveil such a stunning action that we would be shocked into a sense of helplessness.

- The chance that the Soviets would try to creep up on us without alerting us, like the tortoise.

What this means then is that we must, with intelligence devices, be able to provide sufficient warning that we can see trends and indicators far enough in advance to protect ourselves. These trends and indicators, however, are not necessarily limited to Soviet actions in the strategic military field.

Moreover, how fast we can react to protect ourselves, a province of the Secretary of Defense, is an important factor in weighing this issue.

We must always remember that we do not have to have a fully judicial case in order to act on a possible violation, i.e., a 90%

confidence level is not required in order to take action on a suspect violation. We can act on well-founded suspicion, on ambiguous behavior, or on developments in related fields that so change the atmosphere that restraint on the part of the Soviets no longer seems likely.

We have a range of options as to what to do short of abrogating the Treaty: reciprocating; demanding rectification; insisting on a positive showing that our suspicion is in error; negotiating to clarify ambiguity; warning that we are on alert.

We must always contend with the fact that no matter how capable our intelligence collection systems are, there can be errors. An error which allows a single legalistic violation is one thing, but the chances of an accumulation of errors such that a violation would give strategic advantage in the near term would be far less likely.

We cannot minimize the deterrent effect of our intelligence system upon the Soviets. He not only likely has a high respect for our national technical means, but he must always consider our clandestine activities, particularly should he go to some large scale plan that could really change the strategic balance.

In considering verification, we must take the larger approach involving not only the products of our intelligence community but the use of our intelligence in judging the whole picture from which a judgment of compliance or violation can be gained--including the international political background, other indications of Soviet foreign

policy and defense decisionmaking, the growth and problems of the Soviet economy, our assessment of the political, bureaucratic, economic and social forces at work within the Soviet Union, and whether they are likely to produce continued compliance or secret treachery.

We must always remember that verification is a continuing process involving recurring negotiations and discussions with the Soviets. They must be aware that they will constantly be held accountable.

When we think about what we would do if we suspected violations, we must recognize that we would be acting on a far broader range of information than pure intelligence about specific strategic military actions on the part of the Soviets. Thus, if we confine our concept of verification to the intelligence process we may unfortunately tend to rely on intelligence only to tell us whether verification has in fact been effective. In point of fact, the decision on whether to push the Soviets or even to abrogate the Treaty must rely on a broader range of considerations than what the intelligence community is likely to be able to produce.

In short, the verification issues we face are not solely those that should be addressed by the intelligence community--they are exquisitely political issues which must be approached on a larger political scale.

We fail to recognize the shortcomings in the Washington naval treaty because of political decisions not to react to plain facts

that were available to an informed leadership and a reluctant public-- not because of failures in intelligence.

Our intelligence capabilities should give us confidence that they can alert us to any Soviet program of violation of SALT II substantial enough to secure a strategic advantage over us.

Those capabilities include our confidence in assessing the mix of political, economic, sociological, and cultural forces at work.

We cannot use the marvels of modern intelligence as a security blanket or the lack of their perfection as a scapegoat. Rather, we must confront the hard political decisions about our security which will be affected not only by Soviet strategic weapons, but by political, economic and sociological threats to our safety.